

SATURDAY REVIEW

No. 4009. Vol. 154
FOUNDED 1855

27 August 1932

Price Threepence
REGISTERED AS A NEWSPAPER

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Notes of the Week

We could wish that we shared the prophetic gifts of other writers who have found little difficulty in appraising the value of the Ottawa agreements. But we do not. For our part, the whole affair seems still so vague in outline and so entirely problematic in its future course that any judgment must be not only rash but almost worthless. What is obvious is that the Conference has not failed. Any sense of failure in the public mind is due entirely to the vulgar ballyhoo which served as advance publicity.

At the least, Ottawa has taken an imperial step which is important and may prove decisive. We have not got the "Imperial Zollverein" of Joe Chamberlain or the Empire Free Trade of Lord Beaverbrook who, Angel, Devil, or Puck, has had a good deal to do with Tariffs and Ottawa. The chance of the one escaped us years ago, and the other was always a fantasy to ordinary minds. But, then, our present scale of import duties is far away from the Tariff Reform which made all the trouble in 1902. Perhaps in the end we shall find that we have got something like Free Trade of Richard Cobden, by very reason of bringing to an end the free trading for competitors fastened on our necks by the fanatics who perverted the Cobden doctrine.

But what shall we English—who remain the poor boobies and simps of all the world—get for ourselves? The Empire still hangs together after Ottawa, where even the emissaries of that grotesque enormity, Mr. de Valera, assented to a reasonable

message to the King. And it would be silly to belittle the importance of any new cement for the structure of Empire. But in return for food duties to help Canadian wheat, quotas to help Australian mutton and New Zealand lamb, tariffs to smoothe the passage of Indian cotton and all sorts of minor imperial foodstuffs, what do we get? Where does the English farmer come in? How far will he be allowed to go?

Are these questions selfish? Anyhow, they are essential. If better markets for the Dominions coincided with agricultural prosperity at home, if we could return abandoned acres to the plough, recreate lost herds, populate again with work and wages our fruitful soil, we could pay with a quiet mind any price imposed on us as individuals. For many of us believe that the real turning of our fortunes is to be marked by a revival of agricultural prosperity, which shall spread work and wages through other industries and trades. It is too soon to answer these questions with any certainty. But not too soon to be thankful for a Conference which has actually achieved something like the purpose for which it was called together.

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It all depends for Von Papen, Hitler, and Germany whether the President and the Government have "guts" enough to carry out the death sentences passed on the five Nazis. Any sort of reprieve would be useless. Just as well let them go free and confess that political murder has come to stay and that there is no Government in Germany. It is, indeed, the acid test both for government and rebel.

Thumbs up
or down?

For Hitler, who, as we suspect, never meant to be driven into this dilemma, could make no further headway if he took the executions lying down. If he fights—well, prophecy is dangerous, but nothing in Hitler or Hitlerism has yet suggested the greatness of a Mussolini or even the force of a Primo de Rivera. And if the Germans are not more level-headed than the Italians or the Spanish, the leopard may soon be expected to change his spots.

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A correspondent has written to complain that Mr. E. Lengyel, the author of "Hitler," criticised in the *Saturday Review* last week, is a Jew and "considering that Hitlerism's basis is the recognition of Race as the supreme factor in politics and is therefore determinedly anti-Jewish at its core, no book on Hitler by a Jewish author is worthy of much attention." This would appear tantamount to saying that no opponent's views on any movement are of value, which appears to us absurd.

The Eternal Wanderer

In the present case however it is immaterial whether Mr. Lengyel is, or is not, a Jew. The *Saturday Review* is neither pro- nor yet anti- Semitic, any more than it is pro- or anti- Scotch, Irish, or Italian. The reason why the Jewish aspect of Hitlerism was not dwelt on in the review in question was that the book under review left this question pretty much alone—wisely as we thought. Before the publication of Mr. Lengyel's book it was emphasised in the *Saturday Review* that Hitlerism is not a programme but a state of mind or inspiration. When its component ideas—anti-Catholicism, anti-Capitalism, anti-Jewry, in fact anti-everything but the Germanic Blond Beast—are scrutinised, they are seen to be as silly as they are violent. Perhaps, when the part played in modern Germany by her Mendelssohns, Rathenaus and Ballins is considered, Hitler's anti-Semitism is the silliest trick in his bag.

The Silliness of Anti-ism

"Down with the Jews" has not made the real force of Hitlerism, as all who have met its adepts know. Many Jews indeed are to be found among them, for they, like a multitude of other patriotic young Germans, welcomed the movement, first, as a weapon against Communism, and then as a means of awakening or exasperating the German sense of nationalism against Poland, France and other 'hereditary' foes.

That Hitler himself was not the prisoner of his slogans was shewn by his pact with the Nationalists before the late elections. Since then he has been

forced by the hotheads, or perhaps traitors, in brown shirts to break faith and adopt a more uncompromising attitude. He is not the first man to sow the wind and find the harvest whirlwind bitter in the mouth.

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The Divine Right of Democracy is no longer an article of our creed. But the groundswell, so to speak, of that surge of opinion still dominates our thoughts unconsciously. The problem of Indian government presents itself to the British voter (and to Mr. Ramsay Macdonald?) in the form of whether India is fit for political freedom. In reality, India is about to turn her back on the only freedom she has ever known. Political freedom may be defined as a system of government under which reasonable and enlightened public opinion is the strongest influence. It does not involve counting of heads, nor the ballot box. These are only instruments, and often inefficient ones.

The Old Regime in India

Under the old regime at its best, the actual government was in the hands of a Governor. His province, with a population of about a million, would be reckoned a large one in Europe. But Indian nomenclature understates always. The Himalayan range, supreme among the world's mountains, is "the hills." The Governor is called "Collector," the province "district." This officer, with or without the help of certain regulations, ruled his province. He still does so, but with an increasing crop of circulars from the Departments and with diminishing freedom of action.

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Now, the Collector, in nine cases out of ten, was accessible to every person of position in his district. It is in the private interview that the Indian tells you his real thoughts. Not always, by any means. He will speak smooth things to please the Sahib. But in no other way. The same man, speaking in public, voting, framing manifestos, will go with the herd.

To Please The Sahib

And the wise collector—many collectors were wise—knew when he was being told the truth. For he had other sources of information. When he was settling the rent of a field, he talked to farmers and labourers. When he was out duck shooting he talked to the boatmen. He got to know what the people would stand and where the shoe pinched. He was neither Hindu nor Mussulman. He had no hungry relations, no caste pressure, no axe to grind. No political programme, no votes to catch. He was open to reason and deaf to agitation.

And its Harvest

His rule draws to a close. We are committed to the ballot box in some form. No country is less fitted for it. For example, **Faction and Intrigue** Prohibition has proved itself to be a wrong method. It will quite certainly be enacted in India. The drinking castes are not influential. The high caste drinkers dare not raise their voices. Faction is a danger to Parliamentary government. In India, it cuts so deep that, in a village, one faction will kill a man on its own side merely in order to charge the other with the murder. And intrigue, as Italy found out, is death to this form of rule. To the Indian intrigue is the breath of his nostrils.

When Mr. George Robey put on a little bowler hat which he would not dream of wearing in Bond Street, and a little moustache which he would not have the patience to grow, everybody was pleased. But are these quite the antics for the Governor of the Bank of England?

Mr. Montagu Robey Mr. Montagu Norman is a great financier, a great banker, a great Governor. In order to conduct Big Business it may, of course, be necessary to wear a real beard under a false name, to be taken off a liner by a tug (in full view of the passengers), to fall back on the old tricks of the revolving stage. But sometimes we wonder. And wondering, reflect on the value or otherwise of the publicity gained by the apparent avoidance of it.

The following is an extract from the *Saturday Review* of September 19th, 1857:—

The Whirligig of Time "Although it is far from certain that the panic in New York and the Atlantic American States has been altogether produced by the progress of genuine commercial mistrust, its existence is not to be questioned. Several banks are in difficulty from the advances they have made to railways, and all forms of railway security are extraordinarily depreciated."

Let us be of good cheer. The thing to remember is that there has been plenty of prosperity since 1857. And there will be again.

Amidst the welter of machines now attempting the Atlantic crossing is one containing eight persons, two of whom are children aged 8 and 6 years only. Even if success does attend this adventurous flight, and we sincerely hope that it may, the inclusion in the passenger list of these two children seems entirely purposeless. There can be no possible reason for their presence in the 'plane other than a certain publicity value. The risk of these long flights is still great, and it is courting disaster to start out with anything but the very minimum load necessary.

The doctrine that the result justifies the risk is in this case completely untenable.

There is another aspect of Atlantic flights which is often ignored. It is a rule of the sea that no effort must be spared in the saving of life. The cost to the shipping companies of an accident in these Atlantic crossings runs often into tens of thousands of pounds, without taking into consideration any loss which may be occasioned by the delay which inevitably must occur. Ships are often deflected from their course for more than 300 miles, they have to steam at full speed, they may spend 24 hours or more searching for the 'plane. The pilot is a hero, whatever happens. The shipping companies, who are hard enough hit already, have to foot the bill uncomplainingly.

The Metropolitan Police have recently sent a letter to the taxicab drivers' trade journal indicating that the drivers should use the new Lambeth Bridge in carrying fares from Millbank citywards.

Grinning and Bearing It This route would necessitate crossing the river twice, but would cut off at least half a mile. It seems strange that the police had to point out this rather obvious fact and then should continue to say that on the whole they get very few complaints about taxi-drivers. Of course, they don't.

How many times has one sat in a taxi-cab, gnawing one's finger nails at the imperturbable back of a fool of a driver? In the most crowded hours he will take you down Piccadilly or Regent Street, and then, when the streets are fairly empty, he will lose himself (and you) in a maze of little back streets. But what can we do? Who has the time to go to Scotland Yard about it?

Whitewash and makeshift hall-mark the Bridgeman report. Ominously enough the ex-P.M.G., the Socialist, Major Attlee, thinks it fine. Of course he does, for the alternative, reversion to private enterprise, is not even given "a mention." Yet it was commonly reported that in 1927 a leading insurance office sounded the Baldwin Cabinet on a definite offer to take the whole postal telegraph and telephone service over, guaranteeing for three months no reduction in pay or numbers to the staff, after which efficiency pay and methods would be introduced.

What was more, making the out-of-hand rejection of the offer more difficult, this great office immediately offered a penny post, sixpenny telegrams, and a 50 per cent. "cut" in all telephone charges. When one grasps the total cost of these to many businesses, the capital thus released to earn new trade would be gigantic. And now the very idea has been squashed. Lord Wolmer's courage deserves a better fate.

Thousands of people are mourning the capture of Jemima. She was only a cat, but for the two or three days of her fame she successfully challenged the "stardom" of both Garbo and garbage.

**Poor
Old
Jemima!**

She strayed round Broadcasting House and "me-owed" to millions who were supposed to be sitting all agape (or yawning) while they awaited the Radio item that was announced on the programme. No-one disputes that Sir John Reith thoroughly deserved his knighthood, but the Bright Young Man who persuaded Jemima to wander into the studio and "me-ow" at the right moment deserves two.

And what happened? Jemima, having provided publicity in the newspapers for forty-eight hours, was announced as having been caught and sent to a home. Thus does one of the year's most popular B.B.C. turns "get the bird." Think what C. B. Cochran would have done with such an idea!

Jemima has reverted to the quiet mouse-hunting nonentity that she once was. That is a pity. She did at least make an entertaining and a natural sound. We mourn the passing of another victim to the cause of Brightening the B.B.C.

From all accounts the Communist steam-roller is throttled down almost to dead slow. And we may be sure, most unwillingly. Dublin is a pretty kettle of fish to try for; India and China present possibilities to the scheming Comintern. And a year or two back Canada's plea at Ottawa for no truck with Communism would have given every Commissar an attack of wireless hysteria.

**The Retreat
from
Moscow**

Economically something is wrong. There's grit in the machine, and grit introduced by Russian hands apparently. Transport and finance are symptoms, not the cause. The trouble lies deeper, in the people's soul. There is the moral rotten-ness. The Army is fed well: but it is fed up. The Ukraine is as loyal to Moscow—well, as Mr. de Valera is to St. Stephens! It is the moment when a long-sighted dictator would switch back to Capitalism before the people rise and the mercenaries go over. Is Stalin shrewd enough?

What to do to lower rates in over-governed and under-populated counties is a pretty problem for local legislators: and marriage

**The New
Doomsday**

between neighbouring county councils, companionate but regularised, is beginning to be tried as a way out. The 1929 Chamberlain Act to unify local government has strengthened the petty bureaucracy's grip

without so far easing rates. And incompatibility of temperament between residential Wimbledon and truly rural Guildford, for instance, on the Surrey C.C. is patent and unending.

One high official's pension means a 3d. rate for Huntingdon: the 22 men in the Montgomeryshire Police Force look fine on parade, as a half-section: how long Dorset can live alone is an actuarial computation rather than an issue of high policy. If Lord Melchett (the First) were only alive, what a prospectus such merger-problems would assume in his adroit hands as Minister of Health.

English politicians on the make half expected Burma's new governor to come from Westminster; but Sir Samuel Hoare, recollecting Lord Sydenham's success in Australia over the Commonwealth's teething difficulties after his Bombay apprenticeship, wisely sends Bihar's strong ruler, Sir Hugh Stephenson, on to Rangoon to implement any constitutional changes agreed on. Sir Hugh has set all India an example Dalhousie or Canning themselves would have approved, in Law and Order.

**The
Road to
Mandalay**

Problems in Burma are largely racial. The stock is Mongolian. So, it is not surprising that most Burmese girls seek a Chinese, never an Indian, marriage. Besides, the Chinaman then does the work: if she chooses a Burman—she does!

"Grimmett has patented for exclusive use against the M.C.C. a nightmare delivery which is delivered with a queer snap of the fingers, but instead of going through at a normal pace strikes the pitch and 'hangs' before slowly moving on and into contact with the stumps. It is impossible for the unhappy batsman to detect the 'hanger-on' from the ball which makes pace off the pitch."

**Test
Match
(Latest)**

That may sound like a dope fiend's dream. It is nothing of the sort. It is merely a quotation sent from Adelaide by Reuter.

But all is not lost. We have just received heartening tidings from a crystal-gazer who desires to remain anonymous, and by a method of communication hitherto unknown and which never will be known. F. R. Brown has secured at vast expense the American and Russian rights of a patented shot. All that is known of it is that while pretending to be in a state of semi-consciousness he feints to snick an easy catch to second slip but, a fraction of a second later, decapitates an unfortunate Australian who is fielding by the bowling screen.

Jardine has gone one better. Profiting by the advice of a dentist, a marine store dealer, and a well-known speaker at the annual meetings of the R.S.P.C.A., he has worked out a method by which he can be given "not out" by one umpire on a l.b.w. appeal, "not out" by the other umpire on a run-out appeal, flick a bail into the wicket-keeper's eye, and hit a six clean into the ear of the only non-barracker on the Adelaide ground.

So we wish them all a very pleasant game of cricket. And we are sure they will have it if this ridiculous propaganda nonsense is cut out.

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Botanists will find this year a special attraction in the gardens of the Chelsea Royal Hospital. A number of plants of a Bolivian species of the Loose-strife, which are believed not to have flowered in this country for 150 years, are in full bloom, and, what is more, are seeding: it is probable that they have never seeded in this country before. The spikes of the flowers are of a very pretty shade of red, and the whole plant, which is an annual, is singularly pleasing. The Bolivian Loose-strife, at any rate, has welcomed the sweltering heat of this year as a familiar friend.

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The next generation should be athletic enough: it is said to be mechanically minded, from constant practice on the main roads in dodging motor vehicles. The daily toll makes gruesome reading at this season. It is the thundering juggernaut of a lorry or a charabanc doing its level 35 m.p.h. that strikes the Homeric "chill fear" into the heart of a family man in his heavily laden low-powered 5-seater. And a perusal of the local Press shows how inadequately punishment from the ordinary J.P. fits the crime.

Fear of what "the county" may say, a local ostracism, may be in the magistrate's heart. Some jurors are as weak-kneed too. The judges certainly give precept clear enough; a sharp term of gaol and suspension of a driving licence for life is a deterrent lesson to a county of offenders! Petty sessions must make it a rule to commit the next half-dozen to Assizes: that will cure it.

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The magnificent effort of every branch of the Territorial Army to keep abreast of the latest developments of the year in service conditions, which can only be attempted in camp, surely calls for a generous recognition in the 1933 estimates. These come under official discussion at the "War

House" shortly now. And since the professional soldier admits in post-war England what he denied pre-war, namely that true national defence lies in a strong civilian reserve rather than in 100,000 first line troops, practical sympathy should be extended. Well-trained brigades of Territorials serve us better than an extra regular depot or battalion. Incidentally, the Guards are lengthening from three to four their years in the line, correspondingly reducing reserve to six. It is a sign of the times: old soldiers never die.

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How many of the younger generation take occasion to compare the steadiness under arms, especially noticeable at joint naval-military tattoos or tournaments, of the long-service marine as against the short-service regular soldier. At Olympia a year or two back the royal procession was unaccountably ten minutes late. By the time the Sovereign reached the arena for the Inspection the troops had been 20 minutes under arms: the marines were like a rock. And it was with the old professionals' practised eye of approval that the crowd, largely, of course, ex-service men, delightedly saw their King go up to the Officer Commanding and pointedly congratulate him. But the lesson had a significance wider than that. It marks the perfection of self-control.

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Many of us have an actual or intellectual interest in tipsters, and it would be amusing to devote a volume to the uncertain factors by which their success is governed. The only sheet anchor would be the fact that they have their moments. They have "runs," just like a number at Monte Carlo, though the table wins in the end. Variety in the qualifications of those who sum up the form of race-horses never impairs the working of the general rule. But it applies, apparently, to all tipsters, whatever the medium in which they work. A few weeks ago the Weather Prophet of the "Daily Mail"—the sort of aide-de-camp to the Weather Robin Goodfellow—predicted the weather of August, after some previous success in similar prediction. So far, he has been right, or mostly right.

Thus his weather for September, which was to open shakily, is at once invested with importance. So it was for quite a long time with Lord Dunboyne and several other Empiricists (there is no offensive sense in the word) of Weather. So it has been, more rarely and less lengthily, with official forecasts. If only one knew how long the vein would last! But, if one knew that, there are still convenient trains to Monte Carlo. Meanwhile we have had the weather. Good.

**Campus
Martius**

THIS WEEK'S ARGUMENT

Is Censorship Necessary ?

YES, BY JANE ORCHARD.

THE case for a censorship is simply that the public does not know what is good for it. A puppy will eat cake, coal, candles or any other cag-mag it comes across between the dustbin and the drawing room. The public is equally indiscriminate, with this difference—on the whole it prefers the dustbin to the drawing-room.

Every medical man knows that the public at large prefers the quack and his patent medicine to the recognised doctors. Why? Simply because the quack promises a certain cure, which the doctor, being honest, is not in a position to guarantee. The State therefore censors the quack by forbidding him to call himself a medical man.

So much for our bodies; do we know better what suits our souls? Take the Bible: the New Testament contains four Gospels which were selected by competent authority from some dozens of popular Gospels of Christ—the best-sellers of their time. Anybody can read them to-day—the Apocryphal Gospels have been reprinted during the last few years—and anybody can see that they are dross compared with the pure gold of the synoptics and St. John. But if there had not been a censorship in the Church, which knew better than the ordinary man what was good for him, the Bible would have contained the lot, and we should have thought less of it.

The film magnate, agrees to a censorship—largely, of course, for the same reason as the theatre, because it protects them in advance against prosecution and possible loss. The censors are responsible for what appears, and some of us may think that their standard is unduly low, and that they tolerate a great deal of nasty rubbish. That may be so, but if there were no censorship at all the bad would drive out the good in the cinema.

In literature the problem of the censorship is more difficult to argue, because some sort of hidden censorship exists already in the fact that the better publishers themselves maintain a high standard, and their professional advisers seldom pass rubbish on the commercial ground that it pays—as it undoubtedly does. But there are publishers and publishers, and some of them publish sexual rubbish and others sentimental drivel. I don't know which sells best—but both generally run into more editions than the best work of first-class authors. Macaulay's famous complaint that the bad writers block the path to fame for the good is as true to-day as when it was written a century ago.

A censorship merely means the verdict of the competent majority against the incompetent minority, an impartial authority sitting in judgment on all and sundry who claim to instruct, or amuse—or to shock—the great amorphous public.

Put in that commonsense way, nobody can deny the case for the censorship as a rubbish destructor and an engine of mental sanitation.

NO, BY HENRY STEWART.

A FEW days ago there was produced a British film in which an actor and an actress each over sixty years of age were seen sitting up in bed with the newspapers and the early morning cups of tea. The Censor cut the scene out. Just what he objected to (unless he has deep-rooted convictions on the subject of tea-drinking) nobody seems to know, and it really does not much matter, because the incident bears not so much on the necessity as the silliness of censorship—a thing which has been proved so many times that it admits of no argument.

What is the object of a peace-time censorship?—for I take it there is general agreement that it is imperative in war conditions, and for one definite purpose. Is it to improve or to demoralise? (It could more easily do the other than the one.) Is it to protect or to propagand? Is its policy—unlike the rate of income tax—to change according to the colour of the party that happens to be in power? Is it to turn a fairly well-educated nation into a bleating kindergarten with a set of instructions for this, that, and the other? Are we to be made to read Red books this year, Pink books next year, and True Blue books the year after?

And who is going to do it all? Where is the Great Impeccable or, if you like, the Great Rogue, who, in the charming and uncensored language of our time, has any chance of putting it across? There are already two fairly efficient censors in the world. Stalin is one; Mussolini is the other. And that is just where the catch comes in censorship. You must have one of two definite types.

The truth of the whole matter is that censorship, except from the confined point of view of group interests, is not merely unnecessary but it is impracticable, useless, stupid and positively harmful.

The film people run a sort of voluntary censorship for themselves, but only because it is a cheap form of insurance. The theatrical people submit to a censorship because they have to, but the theatre is no better, no cleaner, no more inspiring because of it. The newspapers have to observe certain laws, and a censorship would only make them rather worse productions than they are now. The publishers of books have to observe similar laws of decency and a certain near-propriety. That is quite sufficient. If an abnormal wants a dirty book or an obscene picture, he will try to import it—and probably be fined heavily or sent to gaol. Censorship would make no difference in his case.

But, happily, this country is peopled by a vast and overwhelming majority of normals, men and women who want progress and not prurience, brains and not bawdiness, laughter and not leers. They form the greatest censorship of all, the censorship of public opinion. And he who offends against it finds himself the victim of what is, to him, the greatest of all punishments—Bad Business.

No Jack-in-office could do better.

What is Wrong with the Railways?—(I)

By Lord Monkswell

TO understand the causes of the troubles which now afflict British railways, it is necessary to cast rather a comprehensive glance upon the history of these concerns.

About a hundred years ago railways suddenly sprang into existence, and immediately showed themselves so much superior to any other form of inland transport that competition with them was impossible. Railways at first were full of technical defects, and for something like 25 years great energy was shown in eliminating some of the grosser of these defects.

Like all other big organisations, railways have to be staffed by large numbers of officials and clerks, and by about the year 1850 the principal officials of all the companies had grasped the facts that serious competition on the part of any other form of transport was impossible, that railway management could always be represented to be a matter too technical for the public at large to understand, and that therefore all that the managers of the different lines need do, if they desired to secure for themselves a quiet, peaceful existence, was to agree together to do as nearly as possible nothing in the way of improvement or development.

The Stagnation Period

So the second half of the 19th century was a period of almost complete stagnation in these respects, though, of course, a large number of new lines was built. Block signals and continuous brakes for passenger trains were forced upon the unwilling railway managers by the Board of Trade, but technical progress on their own account was deliberately reduced by the managements to a very low point.

All this time the railway managers experienced very little pressure either from the railway servants or the shareholders. Though the methods of the railways were in many respects inefficient, wages were on a scale that made it possible to earn moderate profits for the shareholders and at the same time to keep charges down to a level that the public could afford to pay. Neither railway servants nor shareholders were organised to any serious extent.

About the end of the 19th century organisation of the railway servants on a large scale began, and soon attempts were made to raise wages by means of political pressure. But right up to 1914 this movement had not gone far enough to do much more than neutralise the economies that had begun to be made by a very slow adoption of improved methods—larger engines for instance.

During the war railway finances went to pieces in the same way as the finances of every other kind of business. The whole nation was living on capital. The railways had been taken over by the Government, but they were managed by the officials who had managed them before the war. During the war railway wages had been

enormously increased by direct State subsidies, and when the war came to an end it was obvious that, if national bankruptcy was to be staved off, State subsidies must cease.

Wage and Work Standards

It is not necessary to give a detailed description of what happened, but the upshot of the matter was that it was agreed that the wages of railwaymen should be fixed at a level much higher than that which they received before the war, that their hours of work should be reduced, and that large numbers of redundant men should be employed. In addition to all this, the railwaymen received their share in the numerous State insurances, educational subsidies, etc., which the politicians have so abundantly ladled out since the war. Taking one thing with another, I think that, for an equal amount of work, it is a fair estimate to say that railwaymen now receive wages of three times the purchasing power that they received before the war.

And before these extravagant terms were granted nothing whatever was done to increase the efficiency of the railways, so that they should be in a position to offer the public a superior or more economical service commensurate with the increased charges required to pay swollen wages. The politicians simply told the railways to get what they could by increased charges to the public, and to find the rest by reducing dividends. The consequence is that ever since the war railway wages have been largely paid out of capital—the national capital.

Hundreds of millions, that in former times would have been used to give productive employment, and to maintain and increase the property and the permanent wealth of the nation as a whole, have been used by the railwaymen as income and spent on living expenses, leaving hardly a trace behind. Meanwhile men in other trades, whose wages these hundreds of millions should have paid, have swelled the ranks of the unemployed, where they have lately been joined by 100,000 of the railwaymen themselves, with plenty more to follow.

The inevitability of this tale of disaster, if the above described conditions were put into force, must from the beginning have been obvious to anyone of ordinary intelligence. Nevertheless, with their eyes wide open, the railway managements consented to receive the railways back from the Government on these terms.

Let there be no mistake. By far the greatest of the troubles of British railways is the political wages settlement enforced by the Government in 1919, which for all practical purposes guarantees to the railway servants a scale of wages so high that (short of revolutionary inventions that might change the whole method of railway working) it cannot possibly be continued, and is now being paid only temporarily, and out of capital.

(To be continued.)

THEATRE By Gilbert Wakefield.

"Behold, We Live." By John van Druten. St. James's.

IT is one of the many paradoxes of the playhouse that we humdrum individuals who compose its audiences are on terms of friendly intimacy with the Great Ones of the stage-world—with Ruritanian monarchs, Cabinet Ministers, eminent K.C.'s, Society Beauties, and the plutocracy and aristocracy generally—but know little or nothing of our insignificant stage-selves. That is where Mr. John van Druten has scored so heavily in his previous plays. He has shown us the middle-classes: the people who travel in tubes and trams and 'buses and the third-class coaches of suburban trains; and it hasn't been necessary for him to contrive factitious plots for these people. We may know them intimately outside the playhouse; they may even be ourselves; but as characters upon the stage they are novelties, and therefore interesting *per se*.

Moreover, in their case, even the most trivial misfortunes have emotional significance. If a clerk gets the sack, it is a tragedy. But if (as in this new piece) a K.C. sacrifices a Judgeship on the altar of romance, or a Society lady's drunken husband threatens to shoot her, it is merely an everyday occurrence among the richer classes, as we have learnt to know them through the English Drama. And, because these High Life tragedies are much too familiar to be of themselves dramatically significant, and the High Life characters appearing in them much too familiar to have any personal interest, it is necessary in their case for the author to provide a plot.

Characters and Stars

A plot is even more essential if (as in "Behold, We Live") the familiar characters are played by Stars. It may be that an author with Mr. van Druten's eye for the *minutiae* of human personality could write a play in which an eminent K.C. and an unhappily mated Society lady were sufficiently human for a plot to be superfluous.

It may even be that Mr. Evers and Mrs. Casanove, whose tragic history is told at the St. James's, were immensely interesting as their creator conceived them. But any reality or human interest they may originally have had, vanished (inevitably; no blame attaches to the actors) from the moment their two distinguished interpreters began the drastic process of refashioning them in their own delightful, but familiar, images. What we saw at the St. James's was not Mr. Evers, eminent K.C., but Sir Gerald du Maurier, popular star-actor; not Mrs. Casanove, but Miss Gertrude Lawrence striving to be tragic, and through lack of experience and the necessary technical resources, failing for the most part to be even audible.

In fairness to Miss Lawrence, I must add that on those rare occasions when she had a chance to use her natural talent for a gay, spontaneous comedy, she was excellent. So also was the play in many of its individual scenes. It is only when considered as a whole that the disadvantages of an unplotted and uncumulative story become apparent. But the first act seemed inordinately prolonged, and was

frankly rather tedious. This was partly Miss Lawrence's responsibility, but the author cannot be acquitted of contributory negligence.

True, he had prejudiced me against it in the first two minutes with a very un-Drutenish piece of rank theatricality. The curtain had risen to disclose Mr. (Tono) Casanove, sprawling on a couch, with a tumbler of whisky in one hand and a large revolver in the other. The revolver was pointed straight at Mrs. Casanove, who was posed in an uncomfortable chair and calmly telling Tono to "get on with it."

Incredible

Now I don't propose to waste time arguing the point; I merely state, firstly, that I do not believe that anybody, not even a woman contemplating suicide, ever faced a violent death with weary resignation; and, secondly, that, even if this scene is psychologically justifiable, it is none the less incredible. And within the walls of a theatre an incredible truth is infinitely less truthful than a thumping, but credible, lie!

After this unprepossessing opening, it was difficult to take much interest in Mrs. Casanove, who was contemplating what one couldn't, in the circumstances, help feeling was a most unnecessary suicide. Had this first act been the third, and with Sarah an intimate acquaintance, her decision to kill herself instead of taking the apparently obvious and easy step of divorcing her husband, might have been understandable. But at this point in the play she was a total stranger to the audience; and the minor matrimonial misfortunes of total strangers are inclined to be tedious.

Luckily for everyone concerned with this production, the situation of the eminent K.C. is incomparably more interesting than the woman's. He is married to a socially ambitious wife, from whom for years he has been spiritually alienated by incompatibility. However, he has not been positively unhappy. His work has kept him busy; his career has kept him cheerful; and, not having fallen in love with anybody else, he has not been aware that his life is rather colourless and emotionally empty. Falling in love with Sarah, he becomes acutely conscious of the dreariness of briefs, and even the vanity of High Court Judgeships. And when his wife refuses to divorce him, like many a good man before him, he decides to make hay while the swiftly-setting sun still shines, and to count the world and his career well lost.

Now, I don't say this isn't a hackneyed theme. But it happens to be a very real and poignant one; and I haven't a doubt that Mr. van Druten could have given us a fresh and characteristically illuminating account of it. Alas, and probably because his interest is primarily engaged by Sarah, he suddenly throws Gordon to the surgeons, and concludes this rather uneventful play with a purely fortuitous and dramatically irrelevant tragedy.

In brief, a disappointing piece. Still, provided you have a natural appetite for the drama, you should certainly see it. Mr. van Druten has done almost all that was humanly possible to render it theatrically uninteresting; but style will tell, and, despite its manifold and manifest deficiencies, Behold, it Lives!

Red Letter Days

Chalk Brooks, Changes and Chances. By Guy C. Pollock

I RATHER think I had a Red-Letter Day two weeks ago, even if it does refer to the immediate past.

There is in Hampshire a very lovely and tiny chalk brook called the Meon, which has a valley and a railway line all its own. Some years ago wild horses would not have dragged from me its name or whereabouts. It was a sort of secret. I have known of it for thirty-five years. For four years before the war and four years after it I had the fishing on one enchanting mile of it. For one season I had another half-mile farther down stream. It is just like Itchen or Test—the same flowers and birds and weed-beds and quality of water. But all—including the trout—in miniature. You can jump across it here and there.

The secret of the Meon was shared by several of us, who also wrote in the public press. H. T. Sheringham and A. K. Collett had rods with me in my fishing for several years, and once Dr. Pryce-Tannatt had a rod and many persons who might have spread its fame came and fished there with me. But the conspiracy of silence was preserved.

Then H.T.S. went and wrote another book—one of the last of those fishing books which live though he be dead—and he revealed most charmingly a secret which was, in any case, no more a secret. It had to be. When first I knew the Meon I could not fish in it, not only because I lacked the means, as now once more I do, but because it was sixteen miles away, no railway served its valley, and the motor car had not been invented. Then, by trustworthy accounts, one might have counted quite easily a brace of two-pounders in a day's basket. Later, when it became accessible by train or car, it began to be fished harder, but its head of water was maintained and its rapidity held in check by mills and hatches and water meadows.

The Price of Progress

Then we did pretty well. In one season H.T.S. and I imposed on ourselves a size-limit of 12 inches on top of our bag limit of three brace and even I quite often reached my limit. We took nothing much over a pound, though he—who never exaggerated a fish—told me of a trout he lost of at least a pound and a half. And notable things happened, as when my wife caught three pounders in one day.

But the war came and none of us fished there and nearly all the mills stopped working and the hatches were broken and bent and the water-meadows were turned to pasture which became marshy as the banks fell in and the cows and colts fed on the weed and stamped about the shallows and the stream rushed brawling along and the trout grew smaller and in times of drought water carts came from miles around to take the river away, and water wheels appeared here and there.

Thus the secret, when it was revealed, was not the old secret. Not that I am decrying the Meon.

I know no chalk brook more enticing, none more lovely. But I could not catch so many or such good fish, and, unlike H. T. S., I could not appreciate fully the triumphs of democracy which had engendered so many bathing pools for village boys and girls and brought so many cheap gramophones and wireless sets to blare and bray across the river from cottages within half a mile of its banks.

Anyhow, the last of us, being me, left the Meon. All, all were gone the old familiar faces. Sheringham and Collett and another fisher friend had crossed the last shallow; the old black Judy, who was with me there sometimes and, after trying to retrieve the first battling trout she saw, was well bored with fishing, had gone home; the fine temper of ecstasy had been turned.

Naboth's Fishing

But during all the glad years there had been Naboth's vineyard. From the upper waters, which none might fish, legends of great fishes drifted downstream. And when I trespassed to cast a hurried eye on some of this water the legends seemed credible enough. The brook was smaller but deeper, the flow more placid, the weed-beds more luxuriant, the growth by the banks more apt for concealment and difficulty.

Then, by other turns of fate, these upper waters became accessible, a friend of mine had access, and so, two weeks ago, I found myself there with a rod.

It was not a propitious day. There was no hatch of fly; weed-cutting had been rather a devastation than a trimming; thunder was about my path.

But in the evening in one delicious little runnel between weed-beds I found a feeding fish, whose rise looked promising. He came immediately to the silver sedge presented—and I missed him. But he was not pricked, and in a few minutes he was feeding again. This time Providence took my too unskilled rod under its guidance, and I hooked my fish. He seemed a decent trout, and I said, "This is, perhaps, a three-quarter pounder and, as I have returned four undersized troutlings, I don't want to lose him." So I held him hard, ignoring the frailty of a 4-X point, and persuaded him past the weed-beds. Then I saw him and said "Golly! he's all of a pound," and I risked a lot to hustle him quickly downstream and drown him before he could become wildly obstreperous.

He came downstream. He was coming past my feet, and I saw him more clearly. So I drew in my breath, made a silly scoop with the landing net and lifted him out. He was a perfect and well-conditioned male trout, and on the kitchen scales at home he weighed just over one and three-quarter pounds.

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Taking one thing with another, memories, "play-mates and companions," changes and chances of this mortal life, I am sure I had a Red-Letter Day two weeks ago.

SHORT STORY—A Storm in the Tea Cups

By S. L. Bensusan

[Letter from Miss Avery Milldue, F.R.H.S., the eminent vegetarian, author of "Madness and Meat," "Hard Facts from the Vegetable Garden," "How to Live One Hundred Years," "Salvation through Salads," etc., etc., to her sister, Mrs. Tuppert.]

APPLEGARTH.

MY DEAR ANGELICA,—I should have written a fortnight ago at least to tell you how I enjoyed my visit, but I have been so upset. You will hardly believe that, after fourteen years in my service, Jones has betrayed her trust and stained the record of this house. Little did I think that, when I left you a day before my time, I was going to find a case of the blackest treachery under my roof. It was merest accident. A tyre punctured badly as we entered the drive. I said I would walk on, while Jackson changed the wheel. I reached the house unexpected and unannounced. The garden room windows were open; I walked in. A horrid odour assailed me. It came from the kitchen. I entered, and was struck dumb. Jones and the two young girls sat at the table, a hideously indelicate slice of dead bullock, fried with onions, on a dish before them. I stood aghast. Jones had the horrible hardihood to say that she thought a good rump steak (forgive the coarse term, dear Angelica) would do them good before they started vegetables again, and, later, that she would be "even with me" for coming into her kitchen. Did you ever hear the like? It shows what meat-eaters come to.

I gave the abandoned creature her month on the spot, and telegraphed to the Mother of Mary and Emily to ask her to come and take them away as there was trouble. She came next day, and I found she had put an unspeakable interpretation upon a harmless, if urgent, telegram. I would not affront you with it, though you are a Mother of a Family; suffice it she was most offensive. I have secured two other girls from the Secretary of the Girls' Own Vegetarian and Mutual Improvement Society; I am only keeping Jones until the day after to-morrow. As soon as the Committee of the United Women's Anti-Licence Alliance has held its Annual Meeting here, I shall pay her the rest of her money and send her home; nobody can prepare such a tea table as Jones: I say it with sorrow. I have slept very badly lately: I dream of that unchaste dish and wake shuddering.

Your loving sister, AVERY.

II.

[The same to the same, ten days later.]

MY DEAR ANGELICA,—A thousand thanks for your understanding letter; it was a great comfort to me. Now, I hardly know how to write to you, for the past few days have been crowded with happenings quite out of the ordinary. What with the earthquake and the labour troubles, the Conversion Loan, the taxes and Jones, I have

thought sometimes the end of the world must be near. Now I'm more sure than ever.

The Annual Meeting of the Committee of the Alliance was held, as usual, in the drawing-room; there were eight of us present. The Report was approved, the accounts were passed, old Lady Dyther moved a vote of thanks to me, and five of them remained to tea. Mrs. Selvedge and Miss Packet could not stay. I will admit that Jones has behaved very well since the trouble, her cooking has been masterly, and the tea she prepared was splendid. There were ten different kinds of sandwich, and we had, for the first time, some very special scented Pekoe, a caravan tea brought, I learn since, through Russia, of all places. You might have thought that even the Chinese would have been a little more careful. I sipped and did not like it, but everybody else did, and Lady Dyther took four cups. I should not have noticed such a thing, but she took them so rapidly. Mrs. Bastion and Lady Stubble left almost at once; the others stayed on.

The most extraordinary things happened. Mrs. Moss and Mrs. Dicker ceased to speak intelligently and went to sleep in their chairs. Lady Dyther, who is usually so clear-headed, began to talk as though she were, I shudder to say it, the worse for liquor. Some of her jokes, if that is the right name for them, were of an appalling description. In sixty-five years of life my ears have never been so polluted. My only reason for thinking that they were jokes is that she laughed heartily at them, and said several times "Have you heard this one?" It was as though an evil spirit had entered into her.

Imagine my position. I was forced to send for Jones. She persuaded Lady Dyther to lie down in a spare room. Then she cleared away and made the two others comfortable. When she came back again all three were asleep, but Mrs. Moss woke up soon and said she feared the heat of the room had been too much for her, and I agreed. Mercifully, she didn't notice Mrs. Dicker, who was asleep in the big armchair with her back to the table and woke up half an hour later with a headache. Lady Dyther slept three hours, and I didn't know whether to send for the doctor or not. Jones was splendid, and said she was sure it would be all right. She said the tea smelt very funny, and made some fresh for Mrs. Dicker and Lady Dyther before they went.

I am forced to believe it was poisoned by Bolsheviks on its way through Russia. Those people are capable of anything. I told Jones to throw it away. She asked me if I thought Lady Dyther ever took strong drink. Isn't it horrible, I dared not tell her what I thought. But after the way she behaved I decided I must forgive her, on her undertaking not to speak to a soul about the tragic happening and never to offend again. If she started gossiping, it would be truly awful. And the oddest part is that Mrs. Bastion has

written asking me where I get my delicious tea. Really, Angelica, I don't know what is wrong with the world.

Your loving sister, AVERY.

III.

[Letter from Miss Prudence Jones to her sister, Mrs. Mew, in service at Overnoons, near Market Waldron.]

MY DERE MARTHA,—i take up my pen to rite these few lines hoppin you are quite well as T.G. it leves me middlin dere Martha i shant be levin the old woman after all bein me an she made it up I dednt expect it arter she bin tellin me all day long as how none of her frends eat meat or drink sperrits, a reglar old spuffler she kep all on dere Martha i thort it all out an las week time a lot of her old teetotal cats come along to gammick an

goffle an I gotter cut sangwidges for em I got a gill of best old rum an put it in the sperrit kittle she make some new tea with what she kep all on about, bein it come from Chiney, reglar speshul, dere Martha, I got me box packed reddy but it all turned out for the best they all took it cept the old woman herself an three on em went to sleep out of six. One of em seem to have forgot herself and towed the old woman funny stories She nerely fanted I did larf I pored away the tea an washed the pot an the kittle in strong sody water dere Martha she think somebody pisened the tea but I towed her I thought that one o them wimmen bin drinkin an it was the headeast of the lot an she bin an ast me to stay so Im goin to but Ill have to be extry careful about the meat in fucher an I remane Your lovin sister PRUE

What to Believe ?

By John Child

THERE was a man who spent his whole life in earning enough to keep a wife and family. He was a very ordinary man and he spent a very ordinary life. When he died, he went to Heaven.

"How wonderful," he said, when he got there. "I never believed that there could be such peace. No papers to read, no trains to catch, no office to go to, no telephones or letters to worry about. Nothing to do but to rest. How wonderful." He closed his eyes.

A celestial messenger-boy tapped him on the arm.

"Sorry, sir," he said. "You're wanted from the other side."

Mysticism will always enthrall the hysterically minded and appeal to the scholar by means of its abstruseness, but the average mentality approaches it with a scepticism which usually denies even the possibility of a spiritual concordance with this material world.

It was with such scepticism that I attended a seance. I expected a certain amount of hocus-pocus, possibly a skeleton or two, certainly a groan and a message from either Napoleon or Nelson. Actually, I spoke with my grandmother, who died a long time before I was born, and with an uncle killed in the War.

The Busy Uncle

I asked to speak with another uncle, whose voice I could remember, but luck was not with me in this case. I received a message that he was sorry, but he was too busy to speak with me. That message very nearly made me a convert. It was typical of my uncle. In his corporeal existence, he had been an Admiral, rather irascible and volcanic, and after retirement he used to shut himself up in the fastnesses of the United Services Club to read and enjoy the "Morning Post." He was the bluest of Tories, a veritable die-hard. He could not stand being disturbed and that self-same message must have emanated from his club scores of times.

I decided to brave the wrath of his tongue.

"What is he busy at?" I asked.

"Politics," came the reply.

After that effort, I gave the spirits a rest. I felt that I had certainly received my money's worth. And I remembered, too, a fact which buttressed my scepticism. The medium had a cold and had been assuaging the soreness of her throat with cough lozenges. Now, the voices of the spirits are transmitted through a horn, singularly reminiscent of the His Master's Voice advertisements, and the spirits, too, must have been affected with a soreness of throat, because there was a distinct aroma of cough lozenges. The curious point about it was that they used the same brand as did the medium.

But, in fairness to the seance, one or two occurrences did happen which were definitely hostile to my scepticism. A bunch of flowers was taken from a table and laid on my knees. Leger-de-main? There was no "main." Then a wind sprang up. It was not just the atmosphere of the room being stirred by a fan. Of that I am certain. It was an exhilarating wind, the kind one feels on the top of a cliff, a sort of "champagne" wind.

A Cockney's French

There was one other happening, not at that seance, which also shook the foundations of my disbelief. I remembered hearing a cobbler, and a very Cockney cobbler he was, too, used as a medium. The voice which emanated from him while he was in a trance was a woman's, and it spoke in very beautiful, eighteenth century French.

What to believe? Some of the evidence seems irrefutable, some so childish that one can but dismiss it as imposture. And yet, if some be true, cannot all, even the most childish, be true? It is a state of affairs where one cannot sift the wheat from the chaff. It is either all wheat or all chaff.

What to believe? Or even, whether to believe? Wouldn't we, perhaps, and the spirits also, be happier if we were to leave them to the undisturbed enjoyment of their celestial peace?

Might-Have-Been Affairs

A Joyous Anniversary. By C. E. Bechhofer Roberts

THE twentieth anniversary of the foundation of the League of Nations was jubilantly celebrated this week at Geneva. Representatives of every European Government were present—including, to the gratification of the promoters of the celebrations, those at present fighting in the Balkans—while Asia, South America and Australasia were also represented in force.

The United States, despite their continued refusal to join the League in an official capacity, sent a large contingent of neutral observers, some of whom were also delegated with similar functions to the Winegrowers' World Conference at Dijon, and others to the Free Trade for Europe Congress at Dantzig.

Señor Larranaga, of Patagonia, speaking as chairman of the European Affairs section of the League, congratulated the delegates on being able to look back on the past twenty years with every feeling of satisfaction. While it was true, he said, that the League had not been entirely successful in preventing wars in any part of the world, nobody could say that it had actually caused war anywhere. Open diplomacy too had not enjoyed the complete success that had been expected for it when the League was founded; but the constant reference of disputed matters to private conferences of the ambassadors of the countries concerned had been extremely efficacious. Theirs was a record that any international body might well be proud of; speaking for himself Señor Larranaga said that he was immensely gratified with the part that Patagonia had taken in guiding the nations of Europe in their search for tranquillity, prosperity and culture.

A Chinese Contretemps

His speech was followed by that of Mr. Chen-Chen-Chen, the delegate of the Chinese National (South-Eastern section, sub-division two) Government, who congratulated the conference on having brought together, during twenty years of the world's political history, the stored wisdom of the East and the practical scientific progress of the West. Mr. Chen-Chen-Chen explained that he was speaking under a handicap because his official instructions from his government had been detained by an outbreak of disorder on its borders.

This statement, however, caused Mr. Wu-Pi'en, the representative of the neighbouring Chinese National (South-Eastern section, sub-division five) Government, to utter a protest: the disorders in question, he said, were entirely due to the illegal actions of Mr. Chen-Chen-Chen's Government, though there was every reason to suppose that the latter would shortly be dispersed by its neighbours.

The two Chinese delegates were separated and, after a short adjournment, the chairman of the Committee for Intellectual Co-operation moved, amidst loud applause, that Mr. Chen-Chen-Chen and Mr. Wu-Pi'en should be appointed joint vice-chairmen of that body and placed in control of the

section which had as its special province the dissemination of propaganda against Imperialism. The appropriateness of this arrangement was recognised a few hours later when news arrived from China that both Chinese National Governments concerned had been put to flight by the troops of the Chinese National (Middle-Eastern section, sub-division two) Government, whose delegate at Geneva, Mr. Pu-Chiu-Wow, was at once co-opted to the council of the committee dealing with Franco-German affairs.

A Good Balance Sheet

The next portion of the proceedings was devoted to the finance of the League. Pundit Hari Singh Chapatti, the representative of the Hindu minority in Java and the Treasurer of the League, announced that its finances were in good order. By an old-established arrangement, he explained, the contribution of the various sections of the British Empire had been increased, year by year, to make up the deficiencies in the contributions of the other nations represented.

The British Empire was now paying roughly five-sixths of the expenses of the League, but his auditors need not fear that British influence in the League's councils had increased as a result of this. On the contrary, the voting powers of small nations had been doubled, a factor which, with the votes now accorded to the representatives of national minorities in all colonial dependencies, ensured that the British vote, even when cast as a unit, should never represent more than a small percentage of the polling.

Viscount Henderson, the next speaker, assured the delegates that the British Empire was only too gratified with the privilege that had been increasingly afforded it to carry the League's financial burdens. He pointed out that, ever since he had become a permanent British delegate at Geneva, he had always sought to act on the same principles as when he was a member of the Socialist Cabinet at Westminster.

News being received that four more of the nations represented at the celebrations had that day declared war on each other, the delegates of those countries were invited to form the executive of a new committee entitled the Council for the Furtherance of Friendly Relations among Combatant Peoples. Lord Henderson announced that the cost of providing suitable buildings and staff for the new Council would be met by Great Britain.

After these arduous deliberations the delegates spent the next day cruising on the Lake of Geneva as the guests of the British Hospitality Fund. It is feared that the delegate of one or the other of the Chinese National Governments was accidentally poisoned at a friendly dinner given by Mr. Chen-Chen-Chen, to whom, however, no suspicion of foul play is attached by his colleagues. The corpse was embalmed and despatched to China by special train and cruiser at the expense of the British Government.

Tories in Torment

By the Saturday Reviewer

DO the Tories—still, I protest, the majority of the electors of this country—behave like the perfect little gentlemen they should be? Look round and see.

A year ago the country was rescued on the very edge of bankruptcy and ruin by Mr. Ramsay MacDonald—not the "Herren Ramsay und MacDonald" once discovered by the German press. There are many versions, some obviously apocryphal, of the actual events of two hectic days. They leave untouched, however much they may enrich or embellish them, the obvious facts—that Mr. MacDonald and his Socialist Government threw in their hand, that the King performed most admirably the true functions of a wise and patriotic ruler, that Mr. Ramsay MacDonald succeeded in drawing to his personal banner the whole of Conservatism, the best of Labour, and the dis-Georged husk of Liberalism.

Ramsay MacDonald made a brave show. The Socialistic dreamer, the deluded fanatic who had started soldiers' and sailors' Soviets during the war, who had stood bareheaded to sing the Red Flag with his "hand on the hilt of his sword" when the General strike of 1926 began, the internationalist, the idealist, the dabbler in Indian disorder, had a sudden vision of the truth. He saw the chasm underneath his country's feet. He loved his country. He set out to save it, and he did save it.

The Grave Adventure

Like Charles I, king and martyr, "he nothing common did nor mean, Upon that memorable scene"; unlike Charles he was not called to martyrdom. But he might have been. It is not to be forgotten that Mr. MacDonald took his political life in his hands, smashed his lesser loyalties, heard his friends call "Judas," risked everything by which he set great store, chose as allies those who had a grave suspicion of him—and all this because, his eyes being opened, he saw what seemed to him the one way to serve the King and save the country.

A year ago Ramsay MacDonald went to Seaham Harbour, as J. H. Thomas went to Derby, to fight a losing battle. The machine was against him; he had no organisation of his own; it was a Labour stronghold and his Tory allies could not help him if they would. Whatever the result of the most critical election in all our island story Ramsay MacDonald was counted as lost. He insisted on fighting at Seaham with his bare hands against the batteries of rancour. He won.

All this happened a year ago. But it is right to remember it, just as it is right to remember that no Conservative expected the huge Conservative polls, the smashing victories where plain Tories were opposed to Liberal or Labour professors of adherence to the National Government. We were very thankful for the converted MacDonald then.

We paid him high tribute for an unexpectedly stark courage; we recognised in him the essential Prime Minister of a National Government to which a mandate was given to do anything and everything, so England lived.

All very fine. But facts are stubborn and it was always true that England would never have been at death's door without the disastrous, if brief, administration of Ramsay MacDonald's Socialist Government. It was always true that our Prime Minister's past, his other self, could not be obliterated. And if it was true that Mr. Baldwin and his Ministers had hazarded by default the great majority of 1924, had thrown away their remaining chances in 1929 by a musty, misty, invertebrate programme which produced that defeatist war-cry "Safety First," it was equally true that in 1931 the Conservative backbone of the country, preferring anything to chaos, had given Mr. Baldwin a second chance and swamped all other parties in the House of Commons.

Have the Tories behaved like the perfect little gentlemen they should be?

They have watched during this year the thwarting of their convinced enthusiasms. They have accepted the substitution of some infernal compromise for their clear-cut policies. They have listened politely to oratory of which nearly every word, spoken in their name, seemed to them bunkum and blatherskite. They have seen their own leaders led by the nose and their ideas hamstringed at Lossiemouth or slaughtered by Samuel.

And Gandhi

They were denied a proper Tariff at the very beginning because Sir Herbert Samuel threatened to lead his remnant of Liberals into opposition. If—if they had gone, would it have mattered at all except to them? They were fobbed off with cuts and economies which left the socialisation of our mode of life almost untouched and lifted nothing from income-tax, super-tax, death duties and beer tax, because the Prime Minister of the National Government had been twice the Prime Minister of a Socialist Government. They have had to stand by while the idiotic Round Table Conference arranged by the Socialists was still allowed to bring to London—and to Buckingham Palace—that "half-naked nigger" and posturing enemy of British rule, the impudent Gandhi. They are now compelled to suffer the Irwinisation of Sir Samuel Hoare and Lord Willingdon, to receive the preposterous communal settlement invented by Mr. MacDonald, to rage impotently against Lord Lothian's mischievous report—and to see the casting away of a firmer, saner policy in India which Hoare and Willingdon had begun after the abject failure of the Round Table Conference.

After all this, the tormented Tory may merely shrug a disheartened shoulder at those Genevan and
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Tories in Torment

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Lausannian antics which leave England without a foreign policy and threaten to leave her without a friend, a ship, a gun or a man—stripped naked save of debts of honour in the avenues of Washington and the corridors of Europe.

But regard Ottawa—regard especially the chaffering and chattering over the Dominion demand for a prohibition of imports from Russia. Remember that in all the creed of Toryism—and the opinion of most sane Europeans—nothing is more abhorred than the Union of Soviet Republics. Soviet Russia has stolen our property and bilked us of our dues; works incessantly against our life and prosperity in every part of the British Empire; tries to corrupt our armed forces, to foment industrial disorder, and to poison ignorant and credulous minds here in our very midst; has murdered her own priests, enslaved her own people, bludgeoned to

death her own middle classes, made a hell on a large part of earth; has persecuted abominably the religion which as a nation we profess, and mocked the very name of any sort of God.

Yet, because Mr. Ramsay MacDonald is Prime Minister of a National Government, Mr. J. H. Thomas its Secretary for the Dominions, because these politicians put their seal on a treaty with Stalin, because Sir Herbert Samuel is Home Secretary, because Mr. Baldwin does not much believe in Toryism or is too enervated to make his belief apparent, England must chaffer and chatter.

Thus far in one year. How much more of Ramsayish Baldwinism can the National Government, with its Tory cohorts, survive? I dare not think, because I believe the continuance of the National Government to be a prudent course.

And—have the Tories behaved like the perfect little gentlemen they should be?

FILMS

BY MARK FORREST.

The Impossible Lover. Directed by Sam Wood. Empire.

THE heat wave has not been conducive to cinema going, but one of the few places in London where it has been cool is the Empire. This cinema has an elaborate apparatus for holding the temperature in leash, and those who hate heat can find a refuge here from ten o'clock in the morning onwards; the only fly in the ointment this week is the film. Ramon Novarro, who plays the chief part in "The Impossible Lover," has a great many admirers in this country, though his popularity seems to be dwindling in America, and they perhaps will be satisfied with the glimpses of their hero, but those who require more than just a few close-ups to send them home happy will be far from contented.

Years ago there used to be a series of twopenny books in pink paper covers, the complications of which dealt with soccer and other games at preparatory or public schools. The schools themselves were wonderful institutions, for the authors drew liberally upon their imaginations, but the moral to be drawn from these publications was always above reproach.

Little Harry

One of the favourite plots was that in which a boy, who was different from his fellow hooligans, came to St. Olaf's; he was different because he didn't want to play games, neither did he care overmuch for the honour of the school. To him the institution was a place where he had been forced to come in order to study, and the sooner he could finish with it the better. His fellows called him a "swot" and, after he had caught the captain of games with a page of crib pasted in his cuff, and reported him, they called him a "sneak." Life at the start of his five years at St. Olaf's was a sorry business for little Harry.

However, when he had been either hit on the head with a cricket ball, or had his leg broken at soccer, or fainted during a run and had been carried into the school sanatorium by the captain of games, he used to turn over a new leaf. That meant that he became the greatest cricketer, the greatest footballer, the greatest runner and probably the greatest cribber, though the books were silent upon that point, whom the school had ever known.

Finally, on the last day of his last term he and the old captain of games, who had returned to play against the school for the old Olafians, would make a couple of centuries apiece, the match would end in a tie, and the pair would agree over two pints of lemonade that there was no place like St. Olaf's, and that the knowledge which they had gained from their *Alma Mater* was not to be measured by the only paragraph from Livy which long acquaintance had enabled them to translate unaided.

Silly "Soccer"

Such were the bones of the twopenny books and such is the skeleton of "The Impossible Lover"; but I will say this about my old loves, the captain of games and little Harry, after he had seen the light, could play cricket and football—the authors knew their cricket jargon and their football parlance. Anything more absurd than the soccer scenes, which have been "dubbed" into "The Impossible Lover" for the benefit of this country, it would be difficult to imagine. As against this my twopennies never gave me any clear idea of what materials, except that they were very old, St. Olaf's was made, but the picture contains some good shots of Yale. Girls, too, are introduced, and Ramon Novarro plays a guitar.

The inaccuracies of the soccer scenes are certain to bring down the usual maledictions upon the heads of the Hollywood producers; half the criticisms which are levelled at the American films owe their birth to similar mistakes in the handling of things essentially British, yet we are just as inaccurate ourselves.

NEW NOVELS

The Fortress. By Hugh Walpole. Macmillan. 10s. 6d.

The Golden Pheasant. By Clothilde Wollersen. Methuen. 6s.

Valiant Dust. By P. C. Wren. Murray. 7s. 6d.

High Stakes. By Sydney Horler. Collins. 7s. 6d.

WHY, I wonder, does one approach Mr. Walpole's latest and largest—if not his greatest—work with a sense of diffidence, if not actual embarrassment?

Not, assuredly, because of the casual and fortuitous conjunction of eight hundred odd pages and a heat wave. The book itself is big, but, thanks to the publishers, light and easy to hold. Whether you tackle it in a deck chair or in bed (and I tried it in both), its size need not frighten you—only in the bath did its bulk become a little unmanageable (and that because the portentously long genealogical table of the Herries family persisted in trying conclusions with the soap dish).

Partly, I think, embarrassment over "The Fortress" was due to the fact that I had an almost excessive and certainly uncritical admiration for "The Cathedral"—a perfect domestic piece of Anglican ecclesiology, which out-Trolloped Trollope and made me feel (and you too, probably) that Barse-shire alone was changeless in a changing world. Why on earth, having done it once, couldn't Mr. Walpole do it again, one said—and promptly remembered the tragedy of Arnold Bennett's artist who began by painting a policeman and was never allowed by his admirers to paint anything but a policeman on pain of starvation for the rest of his life.

Another to Come

Mr. Walpole, I suppose, is too wise and—as befits the head of the Book Society—too good to repeat himself: so, having shown us that he can do better than Trollope, he sets out to go one better than Galsworthy.

The Herries family may not be more prolific than the Forsytes, but they seem to go further back and to spread themselves about more in the world, with the natural result that they take up more room in the telling and demand a lot more pages. We are still nearly a hundred years behind the times in this third volume, and, in spite of the publishers' and Mr. Walpole's pledged word, I doubt if the promised fourth and last will really see us home. At present, at any rate, it looks as though the Herries family will join the Dictionary of National Biography and the Encyclopædia Britannica in having two or three supplementary volumes for the flotsam and jetsam from the main voyage.

That, of course, does not matter, provided the ultimate result is a work of art that gives complete and utter satisfaction. But will it? I am more than a little doubtful. Chiefly because Mr. Walpole's method (or style, or manner) leaves the rather uncomfortable feeling that this is an historical novel in which the historical details are all so carefully and correctly worked out—and in—that they

are more important than the novel itself. There is too much powder in the jam, with the result that none of the characters stand out sufficiently to fix themselves clearly in the mind.

Mr. Galsworthy's method is very different—or at least it produces exactly the opposite result. The Forsyte clan is there, but you recognise them as individuals without constantly referring to a genealogical table at the end. The Herries family tree has to be continually in use (that is why I cannot recommend the third volume of the Walpole quadrilogy for the bath room—the genealogical table versus the soap dish). With Mr. Galsworthy the individuals are the more important—with Mr. Walpole the individuals are submerged in the clan.

Perhaps Mr. Walpole intended this? At least one might gather as much from this sort of conversation:

"You are all waiting for me to die."

"Nonsense, Jennifer."

"No, but it is not nonsense. I cannot understand it, all the bother and the worry. People are born and they die, and other people are born, and it is all for nothing."

Lacking in Life

That, to be sure, may be sound philosophy (I myself am inclined to think it very sound indeed); but the theory that life is all for nothing does not make for interest in a novel; for all fiction is written on the tacit assumption that life is the only thing that matters. That, of course, is not scientifically or philosophically true—but, then, neither is fiction. And the plain fact is that the book, for all its multiplicity of character and fertility of detail—its scenes in Keswick and Kennington, its Conservatives and its Chartists—lacks drama and dramatic force; in other words, it lacks life.

"Vanessa," the fourth volume, may yet retrieve the too frequent tedium of the third, but it will have to be very differently done.

Breathe on your characters, Mr. Walpole, and make them live—don't merely describe them in the act of living.

That advice also, I think, applies to Miss Clothilde Wollersen.

"The Golden Pheasant" is extraordinarily pleasing in many ways—in all ways, really, except one. Miss Wollersen has put new wine into an old bottle and the result is unusual and stimulating. At first, when the "eternal triangle" rears its ugly and tedious head one feels inclined to snort (and entirely at Miss Wollersen's expense) but the snort tails off into a half pleased little sniff and then disappears altogether, and admiration for the way in which she has treated the age-old plot takes its place.

If, of course, you are the sort of person who really intends your fiction to be an anodyne, a drug, then you will not even find that little 'but'; you will find nothing in "The Golden Pheasant" that is not extraordinarily good. But (there it is again) Miss Wollersen's characters (like the Herries family) make little pretence of coming down from their pages and mingling with the crowd. The man, the woman and the woman's husband stay on their stage until the end of the piece, and then, tired out with their performance, seem to say

"Goodnight; we have shown you what would have happened had our characters been as we imagine them to be—we are tired now and we wish to go home—we wish to become men and women ourselves until to-morrow, when we will do the whole thing over again."

The eternal triangle will in all probability continue till the end of things. Men will love women who, in actual fact, it would be safer and wiser and kinder not to love. But if the story, or the play, is to mean anything it must be treated in a new way or the characters themselves must 'get it across.' They must, by their ability, change the snort into something resembling appreciation.

Miss Wollersen has treated her story quite delightfully, and written it delightfully, and if, next time, she could impress us that she was dealing with something out of life, that her characters were living and not acting, then she would give us something very good indeed.

Did you like "Beau Geste"? Did your pulse beat the more quickly as you hurried, breathlessly, through the pages of the Foreign Legion story? Yes? Then run out quickly and buy "Valiant Dust."

Mr. P. C. Wren must take the blame for many jobs left undone, for many hours of idle ease; for I defy anyone to start reading this new French Foreign Legion story without finishing it at a sitting.

Mr. Sydney Horler is a practical technician. He knows how to construct a plot and how to hold the interest of a not too sophisticated reader. So "High Stakes," turned out on an approved plea, becomes just the story for a wet afternoon during a holiday. It is all about a brilliant young inventor who has found the secret for which the War Offices and Admiralties of the world are waiting, the efforts of international crooks and scoundrels to do him in, and the counter-espionage of our secret service—friend and enemy being harboured in the house of his father (he himself was a naval officer), a highly distinguished member of Society and the Civil Service. Everything is all right except the odd phrases which fall from the lips of these civilised and educated folk—and occasional errors which must be due to carelessness. Anyhow, there is a large public for social distinction, however queer its speech, and a larger public for such an exciting yarn as Mr. Horler has written.

A.A.

A TROUBADOR'S SONG

Will she walk the flowered road,
Lithe and supple as a boy?
I'll sing the stones their lovely load,
Sing for joy.
Bends the sweet head to the rose,
Perfume making perfume more?
I'll bid the petals kiss her toes,
Bid them pour.
Sparkle to the moon those eyes?
The stars in anguished love must cry;
The moon shall swoon in sweet surprise,
And I shall die.

P.B.

THE INCOMPARABLE QUEEN.

Queen Elizabeth. By Mona Wilson. Peter Davies. 5s. net.

JUDGED by any standard Queen Elizabeth was one of the most remarkable women in history. The success she achieved, the mystery of her personality, the brilliance of her talents, all combine to single her out of the common run of her sisters. No other queen can be compared with her, for, powerful as was the impress set by Queen Victoria on her age, the latter had not a tithe of the difficulties that confronted the Virgin Queen from girlhood to the summit of her reign and almost till death.

Elizabeth is comparable with Charles in many points. A chequered youth brought both to the throne wary against danger and capable of appraising life; both inherited a land embittered by civil and religious dissension; both began their reigns with poor cards and needed masters of the situation; both found England weak and left her strong. In both cases the most usual means employed was a refusal to be pushed that was the despair of their Councils. Charles as well as Elizabeth displayed a tortuous resolution not to allow others to meddle in his matrimonial affairs. During the reigns of both the rise of England's sea power was a factor of vital importance.

Miss Mona Wilson's present study of Queen Elizabeth is unpretentious, but none the less excellent. Were her manner a little less quiet it might indeed be thought brilliant for the matter could hardly be better. To pick the way between history and mere personal appreciation demands a delicate talent, and in this the authoress' success is highly to be commended. She does full justice to Elizabeth's foibles as well as her qualities, and does not slur over the unpleasant side displayed in her relations with Mary Queen of Scots; but dwells at the same time and with justice upon the overpowering reasons of State, that vitally concerned the welfare of England and underlay her policy.

Elizabeth's character is one peculiarly difficult for men to understand, and it may be that a woman biographer has an advantage. Miss Wilson has used sources open to all, and professes to have no object other than to construct an accurate outline of her subject; yet I confess that after reading her essay I seem to understand points in Elizabeth's nature better than before. On the early part of the queen's life Miss Wilson is particularly good, and she makes an interesting point with the suggestion that Elizabeth's subsequent aversion to marriage, which has given rise to so much speculation, may have sprung from her courtship, almost amounting to persecution, by Lord Thomas Seymour, Henry VIII.'s Lord High Admiral, who after the king's death married his widow Catherine Parr and was executed two years later for high treason in trying, with the Royal consent, to marry a presumptive heir to the throne.

Miss Wilson is not so much concerned with the glamour as with the comprehension of the Elizabethan age, but the perfume of great deeds hangs about her pages and they evoke noble pictures. She is highly to be congratulated on well accomplishing a difficult task.

A THOROUGH-PACED RASCAL

My Life and Adventures. By Casanova, Chevalier de Seingalt. Translated by Arthur Machen. Joiner & Steele. 8s. 6d.

AS a rule, the man who gives himself away in a frank autobiography commands the sympathy of his readers. His good qualities are thrown into relief by his confession of vice and weakness. Pepys has a charm which is almost irresistible. Montaigne was a genius as well as a merciless student of his own defects.

That glorious scoundrel Benvenuto Cellini with all his faults fascinates with the picture of his own personality and his autobiography will last as long as any of his works of art. If it were only for his love of Michelangelo, he stands among those great figures who live for ever in the world of letters.

Casanova belongs to the tribe of thorough-paced rascals who have not scrupled to proclaim their secrets to the world, but he is generally one of the least attractive. One can forgive his meanness, but he is too often a bore, harping over and over again on the monotonous details of his physical pleasures. There is nothing in him of the sombre wickedness of Don Juan. He was just a woman-hunter who in his memoirs licks his lips nastily over the memory of facile conquests.

An Heroic Episode

For a moment he rises to a higher level. His escape from the Piombi at Venice was an heroic episode forced on him by forethought for his own skin and it ranks as an achievement with Cellini's escape from the Castle of Sant' Angelo. Probably the Italian was the bigger liar of the two.

In his original twelve volumes, Casanova called a spade a spade with a more than episcopal vengeance. The veil was drawn over nothing, so that his romance is the romance of the farmyard minus its procreative purpose. In Mr. Machen's excellent translation the reader is spared much nauseating repetition and certainly finds the best of the autobiography in good racy English. The translator is not unnecessarily squeamish and reproduces his original when at its best with real gusto.

No Scruples

In his preface Mr. Machen remarks that Casanova was not only a woman hunter, but a card sharper and occult swindler as well. At cards his sleight of hand sometimes corrected the caprices of that jade fortune. As a dealer in the occult, he was ingenious in the extreme, making money out of credulous and erotic old ladies without the shadow of a scruple. Characteristically enough, his own success sometimes frightened him. Like Sludge the medium, he was not quite sure how far he had cheated and how far the results were due to powers beyond his ken. It is the story of all who play with the supernatural for profit's sake.

Mr. Machen talks of Cagliostro and St. Germain with a pleasant hint that "the modern occultist will take anything seriously, even pantomime

fairies on a photographic plate," though he is a less successful business man than the occultist of the past. In his agreeable way our translator shakes his head over the materialism of the recent past when a man might try and make everything clear with a boxful of chemicals. Physical science has increased the number of mysteries and wrapped their obscurities in thicker darkness. We cannot scoff so lightly as we used at the alchemist's search for the philosopher's stone.

It seems improbable that many readers will peruse the thousand closely printed pages which Mr. Machen has taken and translated from Casanova's twelve volumes. It is a book to skip lightly, with an ungodly chuckle over its hero's naughtiness. In merry mood, Casanova, when he is off his favourite subject, woman, is an amusing companion and can tell a story against himself with point and brilliance. It takes all kinds to make a world and perhaps there was something better hidden within this shameless swindler and woman-hunter than he himself knew.

A SIMPLE, QUIET LIFE

Selwyn Image Letters. Edited by H. Mackmurdo. Grant Richards. 10s. 6d.

PROFESSOR Image devoted his life to the teaching of Beauty. While still a young man up at Oxford, where he was studying for the Church, he came under the influence of Ruskin, who was then occupying the Slade chair of Art. This influence remained with him throughout his life, keeping him forever close to the subject which was so near to his heart.

He was never dogmatic. To the whole of life, he brought a clear and just criticism of conduct, a deep and appreciative love of the beautiful and a distrust of everything which savoured of vulgarity or ostentation. Shunning the limelight, he lived his quiet life working towards the one end which to him really mattered, and when, later, he was elected to the chair which Ruskin had adorned, his pleasure that so fitting a reward should crown his achievements, was great indeed.

This volume of letters mirrors the man as no biography could have been done. Their intimacy and common-sense, their expression of gratitude to all and sundry for the beauty and happiness which he found in life in such plentiful measure, strikes the reader forcibly and pictures the writer's happy content and well-being. The simplicity and breadth of his outlook is very well brought forward, albeit unconsciously, by Professor Image himself, and his quiet enjoyment of the blessings of life points a moral that might well be assimilated in these restless, sensation-seeking days.

There is a facsimile letter included in the volume. One is at once struck by the precision and beauty of the handwriting, and, should anyone doubt the truism that a man's calligraphy is the truest guide to the order of his mind, it would seem that here is yet another proof.

Mr. Mackmurdo deserves a wide measure of thanks, not only for his careful editing of these letters, but also for his persistent championship of Professor Image's cause, which has resulted in such a delightful and characteristic book.

A COLONIAL SURVEY

The Land of the New Adventure: The Georgian Era in Nova Scotia. By William Inglis Morse. Quaritch. £2 15s.

DR. MORSE opens this study of Nova Scotia in the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries with a survey of its social and political history as it is recorded in contemporary documents or may be assumed from travellers' tales, official pronouncements, and from articles and advertisements in Nova Scotian newspapers. There has been little attempt to elaborate the garnered facts, and the study consequently resembles a note-book in which are set down the day-by-day discoveries of an historian adventurer with a particular affection for the period and scene with which he deals. There would seem, however, to be method in this apparent lack of method, for the story as told is curiously attractive, leaves on the reader's mind a series of vivid impressions of the land and the people, and excites a desire to know more of them.

The Acadian past is but lightly touched upon, and it is as a British province that Nova Scotia is presented to us, with its population built up of New England settlers, English, Scottish and German immigrants and Loyalists driven from the United States in 1783-84. A census of 1767, quoted by Dr. Morse, reported more than half the people of the country as of American birth; and during the War of Independence this fact was reflected in the general feeling which, according to a manuscript journal of the time by an unknown writer, was a source of considerable anxiety to the Government. "The people," so ran an official report "were inclined to search after a Liberty so bordering on Democracy as to weaken and destroy the authority of the Crown." The plight of the despoiled loyalists from the new republic, who presently flocked into Nova Scotia, no doubt effectually cured this democratic obsession.

Few Fire-places

Dr. Morse, however, is not greatly concerned with these political issues, dealing principally with the general economics of the province, and with the industrial and social life indicated by exports and imports, the latter demonstrating that the standard of living was fairly high. Travel was difficult, and life in some of the inns no joke. Buildings, even in Halifax, were mostly of wood, and the specific mention of fire-places as attractive amenities suggests that in many cases the methods of heating were somewhat crude. The better sort of furniture was imported, but not apparently to any considerable extent, though here and there good examples may be met with. The cruder sort was made locally.

Rum seems to have been the staple tipple, either imported or distilled at home; and quack medicines were freely advertised. The refinements of life were not neglected. Men's dancing lessons for instance cost three guineas for the season, ladies two. Plays, farces, classics and French books were imported by booksellers. Nor was the theatre itself neglected, companies from the States being welcome; and it is reported that Fanny Kemble was expected, vainly, to extend her American tour to

Halifax. European fashions were sedulously aped, and a scrap book, happily preserved, suggests that Nova Scotia was never probably more than an Atlantic crossing behind the times.

Having dealt with the economic and social scene, Dr. Morse goes on to describe in detail such old colonial houses and churches as remain or are recorded in contemporary prints and the carving of the tombstones in which the craftsmen of the province excelled. The book, which is published in a limited and numbered edition of 350 copies is handsomely printed on handmade paper, and is illustrated with ninety collotype plates, many from photographs taken by the author. The format, the limited number printed, and the high price of the work suggest that it is intended primarily for the descendants of the original settlers mentioned, as a permanent memorial of their ancestors.

THE TEMPLE OF GOURMETS

Good Fare: A Code of Cookery. By Edouard de Pomiane. Howe. 6s. net.

Sound Catering for Hard Times. By V. H. Mottram and E. C. Mottram. Nisbet. 4s. 6d.

TO-DAY the salvation of English cooking is at hand. Few households can any longer afford that horror, the "good plain cook," and our families are too small and our overdrafts too large to allow us the traditional British sirloin and leg of mutton. But without our plain cooks and our large joints we are faced with new difficulties.

The main trouble with modern cookery books is that the simple ones are so dull while the amusing ones demand a certain amount of technique. M. de Pomiane says in effect, "You need not be kitchen-slaves, learning slowly as your mothers and grandmothers learned. You shall be artists and scientists." He treats of frying, grilling, braising, roasting, cooking in water; gives a vocabulary of cooking terms, a list of necessary requisites (One can get excellent results with Woolworth saucepans, but the novice is saved much anxiety by having the right utensils), advice on planning a menu, an explanation of the composition of foods, and a note on the effects of the various methods of cooking. And what variety in the recipes that follow! We find Caucasian shashlik; a succulent dish of tongue and gingerbread, from the Baltic; chicken with a sauce of green gooseberries; and a delectable new recipe for cooking ham.

It must not be thought that all M. de Pomiane's recipes are exotic; he takes a page to discuss the simple but so often maltreated scrambled egg, gives eleven recipes for transforming cabbage into a dish of beauty, and, an excellent idea, gives his quantities (of onions, for example) in ounces instead of in the usual ridiculous numbers, irrespective of size. This book will help to convert the modern English kitchen from a chamber of horrors to the temple of gourmets.

Messrs. Mottram's little tract on economic but calorific feeding, on the other hand, uses chiefly "dishes from a well-known cookery book which for years has been the standby of the British household, viz., Mrs. Beeton's."

PEGGIE ROBB-SMITH.

A PICTURE OF AUSTRIA

Austria of To-day. By Victor Wallace Germaines.
Macmillan & Co. 12s. 6d. net.

MOST Englishmen have sympathy with Austrians and admiration for Hungarians. Even in the days of the Boer War when the abuse heaped on our country by much of the continent of Europe reached its pinnacle in Vienna, the Austrian capital offered charming hospitality to English travellers: we were never made to feel personal responsibility for Great Britain's supposed misdeeds. Austrians are easygoing and have perfect manners; we could not fail to get on with them. Hungarians are brave and sportsmanlike: qualities that go to our hearts. The result was a degree of liking perhaps not equalled by our feeling for any other peoples in Europe.

The Austro-Hungarian empire has ceased to exist: Austria and Hungary have suffered by the treaties of peace more than any of their allies, and Austria even more than Hungary.

Competent and Passionate

Austria has waited long for a competent account of her recent history and present problems; now she has got it in this fine study by Mr. Victor Germaines "Austria of To-day." By "competent" is not meant dispassionate. Mr. Germaines writes with emotion and it is fitting that he should. His subject demands passionate treatment. The drama of the fall of the Hapsburgs, the fight against Socialism, the impoverishment of intellect and gentle birth in Austria, her fall, almost into the abyss, and her relative rise; all this forms a story that, to be understood, must be felt, and, to be felt, must be told by a man of feeling.

Such a man Mr. Germaines is. He is, too, a master of his subject: knows pre-war and post-war Austria like his hand, and even war-time Austria, having been prisoner there. This enables him to correct many legends—as that the Allied blockade caused famine, whereas the real pinch came months afterwards; or that the Austrians fought badly against the Italians; or that the Italians behaved brutally to them; or that Socialism had anything to do with labouring men, since as Mr. Germaines well points out, in Austria, as indeed everywhere else, the Socialists and their doctrines were all bourgeois. Anyone with illusions left on that score should read Mr. Germaines' account of the origins of the Austrian republic, with its father, racial dissolution, and its mother, hunger, and his chapter called "Down into Darkness" on the disruptive effect of Socialism, once Socialists were in power.

Schober and Baldwin

Brilliant portraits cross these pages. No one should miss Mr. Germaines on the Archduke Franz Ferdinand, the Emperor Charles, the peevish Aehrenthal, whose annexation of Bosnia in 1909 laid the firmest foundations of war, and on the all-

but Bolshevik Otto Bauer, "the learned doctrinaire mounted on his pet hobby-horse and spurring this sorry steed to the devil." On the first two he throws fresh light. The hero of the book is Dr. Schober, the police inspector told off to guard Edward VII, at Marienbad, where he earned the king's golden opinion, later as prefect of police in Vienna to save his country by strong and appropriate action from the horrors of a Bolshevik revolution, and finally as Chancellor of the Austrian republic to enable it to struggle upwards to something like independent life. Mr. Germaines compares Dr. Schober to Mr. Stanley Baldwin (to whom the book is dedicated).

Pessimism

But the greatest interest in the book lies in Mr. Germaines' general thesis, that the fall of the Austrian empire was in the main due to what he calls "the gravitational pull of the racial mass," and that the present state of Austria composes a danger to European peace. It is impossible to disagree with him. The remedy, he suggests, is to be found in international free trade: alas, devoutly as one may agree here too, it is hard to see this as a drug likely to be administered. Unless the issue of the present state of Austria and its reactions on Europe be fairly faced, Mr. Germaines can see nothing ahead but the menace of war. Logically we must agree; but here, too, pessimism may, for the reason given above, prove unjustified. At least we must hope so.

There is an idea about that a Big Bank is interested only in Big Business. Is that really the case? Surely, the wide variety of localities in which you can see branches of the Westminster Bank should alone be enough to dispel the notion. To all, a banking account supplies a background—a feeling of stability; and those who may have misgivings about opening one with 'so little' are invited to find that their hesitation may have been groundless

A leaflet outlining the many services offered by the Bank to its customers may be had on asking at any local branch

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"Lack of Leadership"

SIR,—People of all shades of religious opinion will, I am sure, welcome your comments on the recent happenings in the Church of St. Hilary at Marazion. It is inconceivable that this "raid" should be allowed to pass without some form of ecclesiastical censure; but so far the Bench of Bishops has remained strangely silent; and laymen like myself are slowly beginning to wonder whether there is really anything in the Church's proud boast of episcopacy. Moreover, the Marazion case raises an important issue. Of recent years the Church, speaking through her leaders, has deemed it wise to indulge in the process of "democratisation," and steps have been taken to give the laity a voice in church matters. The essence of democracy is the rule of the majority, which, of course, is a translation of the Victorian precept—"the greatest good for the greatest number."

Unless I am misinformed the majority of the people who regularly attend St. Hilary's Church at Marazion are wholeheartedly in favour of the ornaments and ritual to which Mr. Kensit and his followers are so opposed. Then, why in the name of Christian charity, does the Church allow without unanimous comment this brutal interference with the religious liberty of the majority of the St. Hilary's parishioners? As the law now stands two or three parishioners can destroy the religious happiness of their fellows, merely because they find it impossible to accept the services held in a parish church; and there seems to be nothing to prevent outsiders participating in the removal of ornaments condemned by a Consistory Court.

Think what would happen in local government if one local authority with decided Tory views determined to "raid" the area of a neighbouring authority with Socialist leanings merely because as Tories they disliked certain acts of Socialist policy. In a democratic society (or for that matter in any other form of society) that sort of thing would produce only chaos; and that is precisely what will inevitably happen in the Church.

J. D. GRIFFITH DAVIES.

Leeds.

Pay Up, Uncle Sam

SIR,—Mr. Milton Bronner's laborious sarcasm does grave injustice to M. Chéradame's argument, which many Americans support, and which may be briefly summarized thus:

The Americans, on their own showing, took part in the war, not because they wished to help the Allies, but because the Germans were sinking their ships and offering large strips of their territory to Mexico. Because, having been too proud to fight, they were not ready to fight, they had to entrust the defence of their menaced interests to European belligerents whom they insisted upon regarding, not as "allies," but as "associates." The help thus rendered, extending over a period of about fifteen months, cost their associates a great deal of money. Their associates have as good a right to be recouped for their services as

they themselves have to demand repayment of their loans.

What is Mr. Milton Bronner's reply to that?

FRANCIS GRIBBLE.

French and German Armies

SIR,—Allow me briefly to answer Mr. W. J. Chambers' specious letter in your issue of Aug. 20. Mr. Chambers' letter is specious because it fails to take into account facts known to all observers who have been in Germany. There is as total a difference in kind between the British organisations he mentions—Rover Scouts, Veterans' Corps and so on—and anything in Germany as there is between the London Bobbies and the Schupos in Berlin, who form part of a militarised, highly armed and mobile force of 90,000 with far-reaching tentacles. The Stahlhelm is a hardly less militarised force over 300,000 strong, and Mr. Chambers might, had he cared, have seen photographs of them in military formation, field service uniform, tin hats, and with ambulances and all ready for active service save rifles and guns left in the depots, swearing eternal hostility last year across the Polish frontier. The Hitler 'Brownshirt' army has its barracks and arms too. Mr. Chambers speaks of the 'strenuous and technical training' required by the modern soldiers. All these men have had it, which is far more than can be said of the French conscript army with its easy one year's training.

AN ENGLISH JOURNALIST.

In the Beginning Was the Word

SIR,—I cannot but feel grateful that, at a season of the year so little suited to theoretical studies, you have been willing to devote some editorial comment to my recent book on "The Theory of Speech and Language." At the same time you will perhaps allow me to express my surprise that you have been unable to find in it any allusion to "the fundamental proposition that the unit of speech is not the word but the sentence." That contention is writ large over the whole of my second chapter, and defended in detail in my fourth. Not only am I in agreement with you on this point, but also I venture to claim the merit of having discovered the reason for the fact, which is that the sentence is a word or collocation of words displaying intelligible communicative purpose (p. 98). It is the possession of such purpose that gives to utterances like "Yes," "No," "Go," "Play," "Fire" (the instances quoted by yourself) the quality of sentences.

ALAN H. GARDINER.

Harefield, Lympstone, Devon.

Inductive Immortality

SIR,—In your kindly reference to my *Pageant of Personality* your reviewer writes of an "assurance of immortality" which "lies deeper in the self than the stratum of visual images." Yes, most assuredly:—But I intended my picture of immortality to serve as a kind of anticipatory grasp of an Ultimate Reality itself transcending Dream. And I yet fancy that this necessarily transient dream experience helps to convey a more satisfactory mental realisation of the Sacred Ultimate than any mere phonetic word-thinking can

do. The picture-thoughts so conveyed also seem to fit in with our most enlightened views of an emergent evolution in the order of the Universe.

Horton, Wimborne.

RICHARD DE BARY.

The Case Against the English Divorce Law

SIR,—I quite agree with Mr. Fellows that a deserted wife can sue her husband for restitution of conjugal rights before the expiration of two years and this machinery was, of course, ingeniously used before 1923 to short-circuit the period of desertion necessary for a wife's divorce. A divorce counsel would probably refuse to appear on a petition if his client had blurted out the disclosure imagined by Mr. Fellows; but if such an improbable event were to happen, I should have thought that the counsel might have referred the client to another counsel. He would certainly not be well received if he suddenly got up and gave his client away to the Court.

E. S. P. HAYNES.

9, New Square, Lincoln's Inn, W.C.2.

27th July, 1932.

Automatic and Mental Actions

SIR,—Attending a public meeting a little while ago, I observed one of the speakers continually putting on and taking off his spectacles. I have since discovered that such automatic action has a definite physiological value.

"The schoolboy saying his lesson," writes Herbert Spencer, "commonly has his fingers actively engaged—perhaps in twisting about a broken pen or perhaps squeezing the angle of his jacket; and, if told to keep his hands still, he soon again falls into the same or a similar trick."

Many anecdotes are current of public speakers having incurable automatic actions of this class: barristers who perpetually wind and unwind pieces of tape, Members of Parliament who put on and take off their spectacles. So long as such movements are unconscious, they facilitate the mental actions. At least this seems a fair inference from the fact that confusion frequently results from putting a stop to them.

But why do they facilitate the mental actions? Clearly because they drain off a portion of the surplus nervous excitement. If the quantity of mental energy generated is greater than can find vent along the narrow channel of thought that is open to it, and if, in consequence, it is apt to produce confusion by rushing into other channels of thought, then by allowing it an exit through the motor nerves into the muscular system the pressure is diminished and irrelevant ideas are less likely to intrude on the consciousness."

Islington, N.1.

M. H. SHELTER.

On Misprints and Cuts

SIR,—The National Government's cuts last autumn cannot have roused more discontent among its victims than I feel at your sub-editor's cuts in my imaginary history of the Irish tidal wave. I think I ought to make it clear that I was not responsible for making Mr. de Valera congratulate the organisers of the tidal wave, or for at least two other curious changes in my original manuscript.

There is something inherently vicious in sub-editors, as there is, of course, in authors. No sub-editor is happy unless he can reduce the Ten Commandments to nine; or the Thirty-Nine Articles to thirty-two and a half. The "Sunday Times," you may recall, once cut out the last line of one of Lord Darling's sonnets. Lord Darling protested, and was doubtless hated by the sub-editors ever after. I must take the same risk.

C. E. BECHHOFFER ROBERTS.

119, Piccadilly, W.1.

British Inns

SIR,—Mr. Herbert seems to me to have had the better of the argument *re* British inns in your issue of August 6th. At least, he did not lose his temper and call his opponents "sons of Beelzebub, the father of lies." Mr. Cameron's statement in opposition is not an argument in favour of the insular inn, but a mere confession and avoidance. A "little inn" will give you eggs and bacon "in almost all cases"; the "greater" ones will provide cold meat and cheese and a plain bed "free from insects"; while running water and a really comfortable bed, such as you can find, not "only in Utopia," but in many a humble hostelry on the Continent, is obtainable here only "at the highest price." In Wales, if you can put up with a "quite uncomfortable inn, you may enjoy "excellent trout fishing"! If I were Mr. Herbert I should be content to let the case go to the jury on my opponent's plea, without submitting further evidence of my own.

J. B. GILDER.

Exeter, 16th August.

SUN AND AIR



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LOTS OF SUN AND PLENTY OF AIR



CITY

Lombard Street, Thursday.

Holiday influences are telling on markets, and investment business has for the moment given place to more speculative transactions. The market for British Funds, so recently the centre of animation, is now comparatively neglected; and prices have given way not from any pressure to sell but rather through lack of public support. It is generally believed, however, that when the holidays are over the tendency will be for activity to revive in gilt-edged securities and for prices again to go ahead. The material factor in this market in the coming months will be cheap money. At present there are no signs of any change in the monetary situation, and as long as these conditions last there is bound to be a strong demand for purely investment stocks. The set-back in British Funds need not, therefore, cause anxiety to the genuine investor who can afford to ignore market fluctuations and regard the present movement as entirely seasonal.

Caution Necessary

While there may be some justification for greater confidence in the international situation, any revival of active speculation in markets is to be deprecated. The sharp upward movement that has developed in gold mining shares is regarded in some quarters with a good deal of misgiving. There are undoubtedly many mining shares of considerable merit well worth buying at current prices; but there are others to which public attention is being drawn, for which there is little or no justification for higher prices. Those who may be tempted to take a hand in this market should bear this in mind, and by exercising caution limit their purchases to those shares that will be readily saleable when the present upward movement comes to an end. It is one thing to be able to buy a share easily and quite another to sell it with equal facility. So far the activity is mainly of a professional character, and, while the market is worth watching, operations should be governed by discretion.

Argentine Railways

A little hope has been infused into the market for Argentine Railway securities by the news that a Bill is being submitted to Congress by the Argentine Government with the object of regulating road transport. This is good as far as it goes. Cut-throat competition is bad, and the Argentine railways, like our own, are suffering acutely from this form of trouble. But what is really needed is a revival in trade and rise in prices of the country's staple products. This is hampered by the present exchange position, and, if the Argentine Government could see its way to unfreeze the exchange and once again to permit the free interchange of commercial transactions with the outer world, a great deal will have been accomplished in solving the problems that beset the Argentine railway companies.

Well-Covered Charges

These difficulties have reduced profits to vanishing point, and holders of Argentine Railway ordinary stocks have seen their dividends disappear and the market value of their securities depreciate to a most alarming extent. With but one exception, however, the leading companies have so far been able regularly to meet their prior charges, and, judged by the margin of security still behind them, are likely to continue to do so. The Buenos Ayres Great Southern Railway, for instance, had a net revenue balance last year of about £2,550,000 with which to meet the service, requiring £822,000, of its 4 per cent. and 5½ per cent. Debenture stocks. The margin may have been reduced in the past twelve months. Nevertheless, the cover seems to be sufficiently large to warrant the belief that the interest on these two stocks will continue to be provided regularly. At the moment the 4 per cent. stock can be purchased at about 66 to yield over 6 per cent.; while the 5½ per cent. stock stands at 90, at which a yield of 6½ per cent. is forthcoming.

Paint Company's Dividend

A good impression was created by the interim dividend declaration of Pinchin, Johnson & Co., the varnish, colour and paint manufacturers. This is to be 7½ per cent., and, although it compares with a distribution of 10 per cent. a year ago, the declaration was fully up to market anticipation. That the directors see their way to pay so good a dividend is regarded as a hopeful sign, and the shares, which usually enjoy considerable activity, remain steady around 26s. It is understood that the Company is doing fairly well and that the trading results for the first half of the current year have been rather better than those for the corresponding half of 1931. At the meeting last March, the chairman spoke confidently of the future, and pointed out that the Argentine business was proving very successful. The Company has large interests in the Empire and abroad and should, in the ordinary course of things, benefit immediately from any improvement in general trade and the removal of restrictions on international exchange.

Worth Copying

An interesting innovation has been made by the directors of Wiggins, Teape & Co. (1919) Ltd., the well-known paper making concern, in deciding to issue quarterly progress reports to its shareholders. These reports will be available within a few weeks of the end of the quarter to which they relate, and will be most useful in furnishing the shareholders with up-to-date information of how their business is faring. There seems no valid reason why shareholders should not be kept posted at shorter intervals than twelve months with these useful data, and it can only be hoped that other companies will follow the lead of Wiggins, Teape & Co. The statement now furnished by the Company covers two quarters to June 30 last, and in this period the net profits are estimated to have amounted to £161,904, in comparison with £138,398 for the corresponding period of 1931. The Company is a good dividend payer, and for each of the last three years has distributed 10 per cent. to its Ordinary shareholders.

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The "Saturday Review" Suggests This Week:

[We hope that this page will keep our readers in touch with the best of the Theatre, Film, and Wireless programmes, of the week.—Ed.]

Next Week's Broadcasting

Once more the Promenade Concerts occupy the post of honour in the week's programmes. They will be broadcast on the National wavelength on Tuesday, Thursday and Saturday and on the Regional wavelength on Monday, Wednesday and Friday. It is manifestly impossible to listen to them all, but those on Tuesday and Saturday should certainly not be missed, the first because it is a most attractive Mendelssohn programme, and the second because one of the soloists is Stuart Robertson, the most promising of our young singers.

There are, during the rest of the week, but few programmes which promise to rise above that comfortable level of mediocrity which one has learnt to expect from the B.B.C. during the summer months.

On August 29th at 8.40 p.m. (National) Giles Playfair and his "Oxford Blazers" make their debut at the microphone—it is hard to imagine why. These undergraduate entertainments are great fun for those taking part in them, but it is extremely unlikely that Mr. Playfair and his friends will have anything new to offer in the way of light entertainment.

"The Pinchbeck Ring," an original play by Felix Aylmer will be broadcast on Aug. 30th at

10.0 p.m. (National) and September 1st at 8.20 p.m. (Regional). Mr. Aylmer is an actor of distinction who has had considerable microphone experience. His first experiment as a radio dramatist will be watched with great interest.

August 31st at 8.40 p.m. (National) sees the revival of "The White Coons Concert Party," created in 1889 by Will C. Pepper, and now resuscitated by his son, Harry Pepper. It is by no means easy to reproduce the 'atmosphere' of a concert party in a broadcasting studio, as Philip Ridgeway has proved, but if it can be done Harry Pepper will do it.

Saturday night Sept. 3rd (8.0 p.m. National) gives us a Vaudeville programme which looks attractive on paper. Vaudeville has its ups and downs and occasionally reaches a very high level. Ronald Gourley's performance on Aug. 23rd was among the best things ever broadcast.

Lest it should be thought that too much space has been devoted this week to light entertainment it is necessary to point out in self defence that the usual quota of sessions by the B.B.C. Orchestra, Section C., will be given. It would, however, be utterly unreasonable to suggest wasting time on these when the Symphony Orchestra is broadcasting from the Queen's Hall.

Theatres and Films

Theatres

To-morrow Will be Friday. By Philip Leaver, is probably the queerest, and certainly the shortest, play I have ever seen in a West End theatre. The *Milieu* is English-country-house, with Charlotte, Lady Immingham (Miss Marie Tempest) as hostess to a group of heavily titled friends. After an act which consists of that sort of intimate family-joking conversation which is simply bafflingly unfunny to outsiders, the author plunges us, first, into a love-scene which belongs (if anywhere) to the costume-drama of some minor poet; next into a Raffles episode; and finally (so far as the plot is concerned) into the most incomprehensible imbroglio of resurrected Pasts that has ever been concocted for the puzzlement of audiences. It appeared that by a former marriage Lady Immingham was the wife of a French acrobat, whom for years she had believed to have been burnt to death in a circus-fire, but who was actually still living in a Riviera lunatic-asylum; that the gentlemanly crook who came to steal her jewels was her nephew; and that she herself had been born and bred among the sawdust! . . . There are two or three good jokes; the promise (unfulfilled) of a saxophone-solo by Miss Tempest; some very odd whistling noises by Mr. Athole Stewart; and some frequently unintelligible Scotch by Mr. Grahame Browne. Mr. Leon Quartermaine and Miss Celia

Johnson handle their exotic love-scene with immense discretion. *Haymarket.*

Films

Jack's the Boy. A good rollicking farce with music. Jack Hulbert and Cicely Courtneidge. *Tivoli.*

One Hour with You. Not very good Lubitsch, but amusing and light. Maurice Chevalier and Jeannette MacDonald. *Carlton.*

Der Hauptmann von Koepenick. Based on the famous hoax. A very good picture, indeed. German dialogue with English sub-titles. *Cambridge.*

Kameradschaft. Revival of the finest picture of the year. Mr. Pabst's great film of the coal mines. *Cinema House, Oxford Circus.*

The White Hell of Pitz Palu. Revival of this Alpine film, directed by Mr. Pabst and Dr. Fanck. In support, Mr. Clair's early comedy, *The Italian Straw Hat.* *Academy.*

Kamet Conquered. The Himalayan Expedition. *Polytechnic.*

Thark. Another of the Aldwych farces. Ralph Lynn and Tom Walls. *New Gallery.*

General Releases

The Lost Squadron. Richard Dix and some good aerial "stunts."